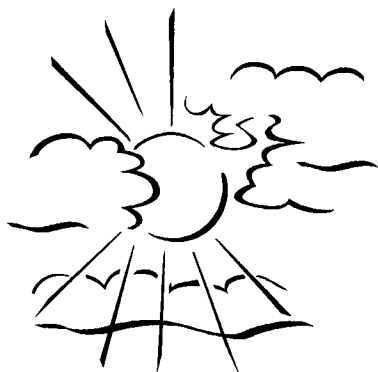


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\*Important story at this spot

# **Articles in Today's Clips**

## **Monday, October 3, 2005**

(Be sure to maximize your screen to read your clips)

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## **BUDGET COMPLETED FOR 2005-06**

Break out the funny hats and noisemakers, it's a happy new fiscal year for Michigan as Governor Jennifer Granholm signed the remaining major elements of the 2005 –06 budget while it was still daylight on the final day of the old fiscal year.

“Despite continued struggles with a changing global economy, we have provided Michigan citizens with a fiscally responsible that both protects our quality of life and grows our economy,” Ms. Granholm said in a press release.

House Speaker Craig DeRoche (R-Novi) took credit for House Republicans saying they had succeeded in balancing the budget without raising taxes or fees. “For three years, the Granholm administration has relied on a scheme of tax and fee increases to balance the state’s budget, and our economy, families and workers have suffered as a result. This year, I’m very proud to say that scheme was stopped.”

Earlier in the week, Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema (R-Wyoming) issued a statement also saying Republicans were proud to have completed the budget with no major tax and fee changes.

Ironically, the budget is actually not quite complete. In what has become an almost annual rite, the capital outlay budget – which funds the state’s building construction budget – remains in legislative committee and will be enacted later on. And, both the governor and legislative leaders say a supplemental will soon follow that could include money to keep open three State Police posts whose funds were not included in the new budget.

Most the attention on the budget came as part of a line item veto of the omnibus budget, HB 4831, PA 154, that ends funding for the Michigan Youth Correctional Facility in Baldwin (see related story).

There are other vetoes which will draw some attention, especially in the Department of Transportation budget, SB 281, PA 158. In that budget, Ms. Granholm line-item vetoed some 25 individual road projects specified in the budget by legislators that worth \$23.2 million. Such “parochial” projects undermine the constitutional authority of the Transportation Commission, she said. The projects themselves were not bad, but the process naming them was and decisions on such projects should be made by transportation and engineering professionals, she said.

However, she worried about the potential loss of the funds for construction projects generally and urged the Legislature to restore the funding in a supplemental appropriation that does not earmark the money.

Mr. DeRoche said the vetoes demonstrate the governor is using the budget more as an experiment in social in social engineering than a tool to aid projects that will have a direct impact on the state's economic recovery. “This administration needs to realize that in order for Michigan's economy to grow, we need to build roads where people live, work and pay taxes, not where we wish they live, work and pay taxes,” he said.

Also cut in the budget was \$500,000 for a state road project on Mackinac Island.

The Transportation budget totals some \$3.4 billion, none of it in general funds.

That omnibus budget, which totals some \$17.3 billion, less than \$7 billion in general funds, also includes the budgets for community colleges, higher education, the Departments of Community Health, Education, Environmental Quality and Natural Resources along with Corrections.

Community Health is the giant in that budget, totaling some \$10.3 billion, \$2.95 billion in general funds, and had no vetoes.

Also veto free was higher education, totaling \$1.73 billion, \$1.58 billion in general funds, for the state's four-year colleges, and the state's 28 community colleges, whose portion totaled \$281.3 million, virtually all of it in general funds. And Natural Resources will see a total expenditure of \$272.9 million, \$25.6 million in general funds, with no vetoes in its appropriation.

The Department of Education budget, totaling \$117.8 million with \$16.5 million in general funds, saw vetoed funding for the Standard and Poors' contract, which specifies that "\$350,000 shall be expended for benchmarking training services and district-level written report."

Environmental Quality saw vetoed for several projects in the Muskegon area, a nutrient study on White Lake and an assessment of oil and natural gas contamination in Little Black Creek. The budget totals \$455.3 million, with \$31.8 million in general funds.

The School Aid budget, HB 4887, PA 155, saw \$250,000 vetoed that would have gone to Ferris State University to study the effectiveness of the Freedom to Learn program. Ms. Granholm said between federal funding and FSU's operations there should be enough money to conduct the study. The budget, which totals \$12.8 billion, \$11.4 billion in state School Aid Fund monies, includes an increase in the per pupil grant of \$175 to a base allowance of \$6,875 per student.

Some of the widest array of vetoes came in the Department of History, Arts and Libraries, SB 274, PA 157, which is one of the state's smallest budgets totaling \$53.9 million, \$41.8 million in general funds.

The Legislature cut grants to libraries and local arts more than Ms. Granholm recommended, so she vetoed about \$856,000 in four programs – for state and local history societies, for Michigan History Day, for lighthouse grants and for preservation grants and access to the Michigan project – and urged the Legislature to re-appropriate the funds for libraries and arts grants.

She did not veto \$1.5 million that she originally urged the Legislature not fund for the Mackinac Island State Park Commission. But she called on the commission to identify the \$200,000 in savings it said it could find and use that money for aid to libraries and arts grants.

Dennis Cawthorne, chair of the commission, said the body has now identified \$100,000 and is implementing those cuts. He said more work needs to be done on determining an increase in rental fees on bicycles.

There were no vetoes to the \$550.8 million State Police budget – the most contentious budget of the last several weeks. But in approving SB 280, PA 159, Ms. Granholm reiterated her desire that a way be found to keep open the State Police posts at Groveland Township, Grand Haven and Iron River. The budget has \$235.4 million in general funds. There were no vetoes in the budget.

There were also no vetoes in the Department of Labor and Economic Growth budget, SB 276, PA 156. The budget totals \$1.3 billion.

September 30, 2005

## Governor Granholm Signs Budgets that Provide Increased Funding for Education, Promotes Economic Growth

*Budgets protect health care, higher education, public safety, environment*

LANSING – Governor Jennifer M. Granholm today signed into law fiscal year 2006 appropriations bills for community colleges, higher education, school aid, and the departments of Community Health, Corrections, Education, Environmental Quality, History, Arts and Libraries, Labor and Economic Growth, Natural Resources and Transportation.

"Despite continued struggles with a changing global economy, we have provided Michigan citizens with a fiscally responsible budget that both protects our quality of life and grows our economy," Granholm said. "I am proud that we have increased funding to historic levels for public schools and that we will continue to protect health care for our most vulnerable people."

### **Community Colleges:**

The fiscal year 2006 appropriation for the state's 28 community colleges is \$281.3 million. Operations support for community colleges totals \$275.1 million; funding for Renaissance Zone tax reimbursements is increased by \$500,000, to \$2.9 million; and the At-Risk Student Success program is continued at \$3.2 million.

### **Community Health:**

The Department of Community Health (DCH) budget for the coming fiscal year totals \$10.3 billion, which includes \$2.95 billion in general fund money. This represents a significant commitment for health care and mental health services for Michigan's most vulnerable citizens.

Highlights of the DCH budget include:

- full funding for Medicaid caseloads;
- restoring Medicaid chiropractic and adult dental services;
- full funding for the Children's Special Health Care Services program;
- partial funding for local public health hearing and vision screening services with the intention of targeting these funds toward preschool and elementary age children;
- new co-pays on each of the following services: \$1 per outpatient visit; \$50 per first day of inpatient stay; \$2 per physician visit; and \$3 per hospital emergency room visit; and
- new Medicaid fraud reduction programs, including preventing provider mispayments, eligibility determination errors, and seeking recoveries from pharmaceutical manufacturers for fraudulent market activities for a savings of \$19.4 million.

### **Corrections:**

The total budget for the Department of Corrections is \$1.88 billion; the general fund portion is \$1.79 billion.

In House Bill 4831, the Governor has vetoed funding for the Michigan Youth Correctional Facility in Baldwin, Michigan. This costly facility is not needed and was originally constructed to house violent young offenders, but the need for this facility never materialized. As the Legislative Auditor General has pointed out, far less expensive prison beds can be used to house young offenders at great savings to the taxpayers of the state. The savings amounts to \$17.8 million annually.

While the Legislature offered departmental cuts as an alternative, the proposed cuts are not realistic and would force the department to make drastic cuts that would result in layoffs. The Governor feels this alternative is not acceptable.

### **Education:**

The fiscal year 2006 budget for the Department of Education is \$117.8 million, which includes \$16.5 million in general fund dollars.

### **Environmental Quality:**

The total budget for the Department of Environmental Quality is \$455.3 million; the general fund portion is \$31.8 million. The department continues its commitment to restoring and enhancing Michigan's environment for the protection of public health and the preservation of our natural resources.

#### **Higher Education:**

Funding for the state's higher education system for fiscal year 2006 totals \$1.73 billion, with a general fund level of \$1.58 billion. The Governor is proud that no university will see their funding reduced from current year levels.

Funding for university operations is increased by \$16.4 million from the original recommendation, as agreed to by the Governor and Legislature. This amount includes \$6.9 million to pay for a funding floor set at \$3,650 per student, which provides extra support to Grand Valley State University, Saginaw Valley State University, and Oakland University. An additional \$6.9 million is used to provide support to universities according to the House of Representatives funding model. Finally, \$2.5 million is appropriated across-the-board to ensure that each university will be paid at least the same amount in the institution's 2006 fiscal year as was paid this fiscal year.

Other highlights of the higher education budget include:

- funding for the MSU Agricultural Experiment Station at \$33.2 million and Cooperative Extension Service at \$28.6 million – both remain at current year levels;
- funding for the Tuition Grant Program at \$58.8 million;
- the Michigan Merit Award Program is funded at \$126.4 million and includes funding to begin payment of the middle school award;
- support for the Tuition Incentive Program is increased to \$12 million as recommended by the Governor; and
- funding for the King-Chavez-Parks Programs remains funded at this year's level of \$5.1 million.

"To compete in a changing economy, we must ensure that every child in Michigan has access to education beyond high school," Granholm said. "Protecting universities keeps us on the path toward doubling the number of college graduates. Creating a new Merit Scholarship that provides \$4,000 to students must be the next step."

#### **History, Arts & Libraries:**

Senate Bill 274, the fiscal year 2006 appropriation bill for the Department of History, Arts and Libraries, provides \$53.9 million, \$41.8 million in general funds, to support the state in its efforts to preserve Michigan's history and historic treasures, provide the very best in state-of-the-art library technology and services, and to promote creativity in the arts and cultural disciplines. The Governor expressed her disappointment that the Legislature chose to reduce payments to state libraries and arts and cultural institutions that benefit all Michigan citizens while supporting projects that only benefit a few. For that reason the Governor vetoed those projects inserted by the Legislature and recommends they use available funding to restore aid to libraries and arts and cultural grants equally.

In addition, the Governor acknowledges the work done by the Mackinac Island Park Commission in identifying \$200,000 that could be used to offset general funds. While the Governor has approved the \$1.5 million for the Commission, she hopes the additional \$200,000 could be used to restore aid to state libraries and arts grants.

#### **Labor & Economic Growth:**

Senate Bill 276 provides \$1.3 billion to support the operations for the Department of Labor and Economic Growth (DLEG). This budget provides the funding necessary for the department to continue to support the health, safety, and economic well-being of the public through effective regulatory oversight, job creation and economic development.

Although the fiscal year 2006 budget does not provide an appropriation for the Michigan 21st Century Jobs Initiative or its predecessor, the Technology Tri-Corridor: Life Sciences Initiative,

the funding for these economic development efforts will be replaced by the securitization of tobacco settlement proceeds, to be appropriated in subsequent legislation.

The Fire Protection & Liquor Law Enforcement Grants will remain funded at the 2005 level of \$7.4 million and \$6.0 million respectively. Also, funding for the Fire Fighter's Training Council will be maintained at \$1.6 million. In addition to that funding, an \$800,000 interdepartmental grant from the Department of State Police federal homeland security funds was added for the fire safety programs, of which 40 percent, or \$320,000, is specifically directed to support the Fire Fighter's Training Council.

**Natural Resources:**

The total budget for the Department of Natural Resources is \$272.9 million; the general fund portion is \$25.6 million

**School Aid:**

House Bill 4887 appropriates nearly \$12.8 billion for fiscal year 2006 to support K-12 education in Michigan, with \$11.4 billion in state funds and \$1.4 billion in federal funds. This represents an increase of \$290.3 million, or 2.3 percent, over fiscal year 2005 funding.

This budget demonstrates that education remains Michigan's top priority. It increases the minimum per-pupil foundation allowance for schools by \$175 per pupil to \$6,875, the highest in Michigan history. The bill maintains funding for academically at-risk children at \$314.2 million; school readiness preschool grants at \$72.8 million; and continues our commitment to early literacy programs by appropriating \$3.3 million for Great Parents, Great Start. This budget also provides over \$950 million in state funding for special education programs.

**State Police:**

Senate Bill 280 provides over \$550.8 million, \$235.4 million in general funds, to support the critical law enforcement activities of the Michigan State Police for the 2006 fiscal year.

Highlights of the State Police budget include:

- \$121.1 million in support for at-post trooper operations;
- \$27.2 million to support forensic services to all agencies within the criminal justice system; and
- an increase in federal Department of Homeland Security funding by \$12.0 million for reimbursement of costs associated with assistance in recovery efforts to the Southern Gulf Shore states from Hurricane Katrina.

The budget also includes the Governor's recommendation to use state restricted carry-forward dollars to fund the administration of training grants within the Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards. Using this carry-forward means that there will be no reduction in law enforcement training grants for the coming fiscal year. However, in order to clear up any confusion, the Governor will support efforts that will restore the general fund and replace the restricted funds.

As it currently stands, the budget continues the plan to close the Groveland Township, Grand Haven and Iron River State Police posts, but includes language that stipulates the three posts remain open for 60 days after the beginning of the fiscal year. The Governor hopes to keep the posts open permanently.

"I remain committed to working with the Legislature to find a bipartisan solution to keep the three State Police posts open," Granholm said.

**Transportation:**

Senate Bill 281 totals over \$3.4 billion for departmental operations, state and local infrastructure repair and reconstruction projects, public transportation and intermodal programs for the Department of Transportation (MDOT).

The Governor has vetoed several road projects because project selection decisions should be made by transportation professionals at MDOT. These transportation experts work with local transportation stakeholders to make recommendations to the State Transportation Commission, who then approves specific contracts. Because the Governor believes that many of the projects have merit, she will be recommending an immediate supplemental to restore the vetoed funds without earmarks. # # #

Port Huron Times Herald

Monday, October 3, 2005

## **New budget holds firm on key priorities School aid increased, health-care for Michigan's poor preserved**

For a state plagued by bad fiscal news in the past several years, Michigan's 2005-06 budget certainly could have been worse. Given the economy's continued problems, the new budget bears good news.

Foremost is its increased support for K-12 education. Public schools will receive \$175 more per student, their first raise in three years. The minimum per-pupil grant will go to \$6,875, a 2.6% increase that puts the state's annual K-12 aid at \$12.8 billion.

Funding for public schools has been a leading worry. With greater demands for quality education, the prospect of cuts in aid has troubled district leaders. For the next fiscal year, at least, education officials will have a bit more money with which to work. Hopefully, that will translate into more progress.

There also is good news regarding health care. Medicaid recipients, at risk for losing coverage, still retain their eligibility, albeit with new pay requirements.

Some recipients must pay small amounts toward their medical costs: \$1 for outpatient visits, \$2 for doctor's visits and \$50 for the first day of hospital stays. The state also is cutting reimbursement to doctors and hospitals that provide Medicaid services. A freeze is being placed on letting new 19- and 20-year-olds into the system.

It's too bad those Michigan residents who often are least able to weather the rising costs of health care must sacrifice. Given those costs and their effect on the state budget, modest contributions for their health care still are preferable to withholding assistance.

Like previous budgets, the new \$41 billion spending plan resulted from hard choices. Three state police posts in Grand Haven, Oakland County's Groveland Township and the Upper Peninsula's Iron River lost their funding and were given 60 days to close, although Gov. Jennifer Granholm and lawmakers hope to find money to keep them open.

Granholm also vetoed money for a private youth prison near Baldwin, about 65 miles north of Grand Rapids. With it, the state saves \$18 million by ending the state's contract with the private owners of the Michigan Youth Correctional Facility.

The \$3.4 billion transportation budget cut funding for Amtrak by \$1 million from \$7.1 million to \$6.1 million. The funding would be restored, however, if the company agrees to build a maintenance facility in the state.

The provision is questionable. Amtrak's entire subsidy would be better spent on more pressing state programs and services.

That said, the new budget generally manages to preserve critical priorities. In an era with scant economic growth and chronic unemployment, that's reassuring.

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[ From the Lansing State Journal ]

## **Governor approves budget, with veto**

By David Eggert  
Associated Press

Gov. Jennifer Granholm on Friday signed a \$41 billion state spending plan that does not raise taxes or fees, gives more money to K-12 schools and spares low-income people from being kicked off welfare and Medicaid.

Public schools get \$175 more per student, the first increase in three years. But just four of the state's 15 universities will see more money in the fiscal year that starts today.

"I am proud that we have increased funding to historic levels for public schools and that we will continue to protect health care for our most vulnerable people," the Democratic governor said in a statement.

General fund spending, which covers everything from universities to prisons, will increase 3.4 percent to \$9.0 billion. The school aid budget, which pays for K-12 education, will rise 2.3 percent to \$12.8 billion.

While overall spending is up, the new budget contains a number of cuts.

Granholm drew criticism Friday for vetoing money for a private youth prison near Baldwin. The veto saves \$18 million by ending the state's contract with the private owners of the Michigan Youth Correctional Facility. Granholm said the facility costs too much to run and houses few of the violent young offenders it was meant to hold.



# Locked Away Forever After Crimes as Teenagers

By ADAM LIPTAK

OCALA, Fla. — About 9,700 American prisoners are serving life sentences for crimes they committed before they could vote, serve on a jury or gamble in a casino — in short, before they turned 18. More than a fifth have no chance for parole.

Juvenile criminals are serving life terms in at least 48 states, according to a survey by The New York Times, and their numbers have increased sharply over the past decade.

Rebecca Falcon is one of them.

Ms. Falcon, now 23, is living out her days at the Lowell Correctional Institution here. But eight years ago, she was a reckless teenager and running with a thuggish crowd when one night she got drunk on bourbon and ruined her life.

Ms. Falcon faults her choice of friends. "I tried cheerleaders, heavy metal people, a little bit of country and, you know, it never felt right," Ms. Falcon said. "I started listening to rap music and wearing my pants baggy. I was like a magnet for the wrong crowd."

In November 1997 she hailed a cab with an 18-year-old friend named Clifton Gilchrist. He had a gun, and within minutes, the cab driver was shot in the head. The driver, Richard Todd Phillips, 25, took several days to die. Each of the teenagers later said the other had done the shooting.

Ms. Falcon's jury found her guilty of murder, though it never did sort out precisely what happened that night, its foreman said. It was enough that she was there.

"It broke my heart," said Steven Sharp, the foreman. "As tough as it

## NO WAY OUT

*The Youngest Lifers*

is, based on the crime, I think it's appropriate. It's terrible to put a 15-year-old behind bars forever."

The United States is one of only a handful of countries that does that. Life without parole, the most severe form of life sentence, is theoretically available for juvenile criminals in about a dozen countries. But a report to be issued on Oct. 12 by Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International found juveniles serving such sentences in only three. Israel has seven, South Africa has four and Tanzania has one.

By contrast, the report counted some 2,200 people in the United States serving life without parole for crimes they committed before turning 18. More than 350 of them were 15 or younger, according to the report.

The Supreme Court's decision earlier this year to ban the juvenile

death penalty, which took into account international attitudes about crime and punishment, has convinced prosecutors and activists that the next legal battleground in the United States will be over life in prison for juveniles.

Society has long maintained age distinctions for things like drinking alcohol and signing contracts, and the highest court has ruled that youths under 18 who commit terrible crimes are less blameworthy than adults. Defense lawyers and human rights advocates say that logic should extend to sentences of life without parole.

Prosecutors and representatives of crime victims say that a sentence of natural life is the minimum fit punishment for a heinous crime, adding that some people are too dangerous ever to walk the streets.

In the Supreme Court's decision, Justice Anthony M. Kennedy said teenagers were different, at least for

*Continued on Page A12*

*Continued From Page A1*

purposes of the ultimate punishment. They are immature and irresponsible. They are more susceptible to negative influences, including peer pressure. And teenagers' personalities are unformed. "Even a heinous crime committed by a juvenile," Justice Kennedy concluded, is not "evidence of irretrievably depraved character."

Most of those qualities were evident in Ms. Falcon, who had trouble fitting in at her Kansas high school and had been sent by her mother to live with her grandmother in Florida, where she received little supervision. She liked to smoke marijuana, and ran with a series of cliques. "I was looking for identity," she said.

Like many other lifers, Ms. Falcon is in prison for felony murder, meaning she participated in a serious crime that led to a killing but was not proved to have killed anyone.

In their report, the human rights groups estimate that 26 percent of juvenile offenders sentenced to life without parole for murder were found guilty of felony murder. A separate Human Rights Watch report on Colorado found that a third of juveniles serving sentences of life without parole there had been convicted of felony murder.

The larger question, advocates for juveniles say, is whether any youths should be locked away forever.

At the argument in the juvenile death penalty case, Justice Antonin Scalia said the reasons offered against execution apply just as forcefully to life without parole. Justice Scalia voted, in dissent, to retain the juvenile death penalty.

"I don't see where there's a logical line," he said at the argument last October.

When it comes to Ms. Falcon, the prosecutor in her case said she does not ever deserve to be free. Indeed, she is lucky to be alive.

The prosecutor, Jim Appleman, is convinced that she shot Mr. Phillips. "If she were a 29-year-old or a 22-year-old," he said, "I have no doubt she would have gotten the death penalty."

Ms. Falcon dressed up, as best one can in prison, to meet two journalists not long ago. There was nothing to be done about the plain blue prison dress, with buttons down the front. But she wore gold earrings, a crucifix on a gold chain and red lipstick. Her dark hair was shoulder length, and her eyes were big and brown.

She said her eight years in prison had changed her.

"A certain amount of time being incarcerated was what I needed," she said. "But the law I fell under is for people who have no hope of being rehabilitated, that are just career criminals and habitually break the law, and there's just no hope for them in society. I'm a completely different case."

"My sentence is unfair," she added. "They put you in, and they forget."

### Tagging Along on a Horrific Night

The case of another Florida teenager, Timothy Kane, demonstrates how youths can be sent away for life, even when the evidence shows they were not central figures in a crime.

Then 14, Timothy was at a friend's house, playing video games on Jan. 26, 1992, Super Bowl Sunday, when some older youths hatched a plan to burglarize a neighbor's home. He did not want to stay behind alone, he said, and so he tagged along.

There were five of them, and they rode their bikes over, stashing them in the bushes. On the way, they stopped to feed some ducks.

Two of the boys took off at the last moment, but Timothy followed Alvin Morton, 19, and Bobby Garner, 17, into the house. He did not want to be called a scaredy-cat, he

said.

"This is," he said in a prison interview, "the decision that shaped my life since."

The youths had expected the house to be empty, but they were wrong. Madeline Weissner, 75, and her son, John Bowers, 55, were home.

While Timothy hid behind a dining room table, according to court records, the other two youths went berserk.

Mr. Morton, whom prosecutors described as a sociopath, shot Mr. Bowers in the back of the neck while he pleaded for his life, killing him. Mr. Morton then tried to shoot Ms. Weissner, but his gun jammed. Using a blunt knife, Mr. Morton stabbed her in the neck, and Mr. Garner stepped on the knife to push it in, almost decapitating her.

"I firmly believe what they were trying to do was take the head as a kind of souvenir," said Robert W. Attridge, who prosecuted the case.

Mr. Morton and Mr. Garner did succeed in cutting off Mr. Bowers's pinkie. They later showed it to friends.

Mr. Morton was sentenced to death. Mr. Garner, a juvenile offender like Mr. Kane, was given a life sentence with no possibility of parole for 50 years.

Mr. Kane was also sentenced to life, but he will become eligible for parole after 25 years, when he will be 39. However, he is not optimistic that the parole board will ever let him out. Had he committed his crime after 1995, when Florida changed its law to eliminate the possibility of parole for people sentenced to life, he would not have even that hope.

Florida is now one of the states with the most juveniles serving life. It has 600 juvenile offenders serving life sentences; about 270 of them, including Ms. Falcon, who committed her crime in 1997, are serving life without parole.

Data supplied by the states on juveniles serving life is incomplete. But a detailed analysis of data from another state with a particularly large number of juvenile lifers, Michigan, shows that the mix of the life sentences — those with the possibility of parole and those without — is changing fast.

In Michigan, the percentage of all lifers who are serving sentences without parole rose to 64 percent from 51 percent in the 24 years ended in 2004. But the percentage of juvenile lifers serving such sentences rose to 68 percent from 41 percent in the period. Now two out of three juvenile lifers there

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*Janet Roberts contributed reporting for this series. She was assisted by Linda Amster, Jack Styczynski, Donna Anderson, Jack Begg, Alain Delaquerière, Sandra Jamison, Toby Lyles and Carolyn Wilder.*

have no shot at parole.

The Times's survey and analysis considered juvenile lifers generally, while the human rights report examined juveniles serving life sentences without parole. Both studies defined a juvenile as anyone younger than 18 at the time of offense or arrest. For some states that could not provide a count based on such ages, the studies counted as a juvenile anyone under the age of 20 at sentencing or admission to prison.

Juvenile lifers are overwhelmingly male and mostly black. Ninety-five percent of those admitted in 2001 were male and 55 percent were black.

Forty-two states and the federal government allow offenders under 18 to be put away forever. Ten states set no minimum age, and 13 set a minimum of 10 to 13. Seven states, including Florida and Michigan, have more than 100 juvenile offenders serving such sentences, the report found. Those sending the largest percentages of their youth to prison for life without parole are Virginia and Louisiana.

### Some Dismay Over Sentences

Juvenile lifers are much more likely to be in for murder than are their adult counterparts, suggesting that prosecutors and juries embrace the punishment only for the most serious crime.

While 40 percent of adults sent away for life between 1988 and 2001 committed crimes other than murder, like drug offenses, rape and armed robbery, the Times analysis found, only 16 percent of juvenile lifers were sentenced for anything other than murder.

In those same years, the number of juveniles sentenced to life peaked in 1994, at about 790, or 15 percent of all adults and youths admitted as lifers that year. The number dropped to about 390, or 9 percent, in 2001, the most recent year for which national data are available.

Similarly, the number of juveniles sentenced to life without parole peaked in 1996, at 152. It has dropped sharply since then, to 54 last year. That may reflect a growing discomfort with the punishment and the drop in the crime rate.

It is unclear how many juveniles or adults are serving life sentences under three-strikes and similar habitual-offender laws.

Human rights advocates say that the use of juvenile life without parole, or LWOP, is by one measure rising. "Even with murder

## No Way Out

Articles in this series examine the swelling population of prisoners who are serving life sentences. Audio with Adam Liptak, additional photographs and a readers' forum are online at [nytimes.com/national](http://nytimes.com/national).

rates going down," said Alison Parker, the author of the new report, "the proportion of juvenile murder offenders entering prison with LWOP sentences is going up."

The courts that consider the cases of juvenile offenders look at individuals, not trends. But sometimes, as in Mr. Kane's case, they express dismay over the sentences that are required.

"Tim Kane was 14 years and 3 months old, a junior high student with an I.Q. of 137 and no prior association with the criminal justice system," Judge John R. Blue wrote for the three-judge panel that upheld Mr. Kane's sentence. "Tim did not participate in the killing of the two victims."

These days, Mr. Kane, 27, looks and talks like a marine. He is fit, serious and polite. He held a questioner's gaze and called him sir, and he grew emotional when he talked about what he saw that January night.

"I witnessed two people die," he said. "I regret that every day of my life, being any part of that and seeing that."

He does not dispute that he deserved punishment.

"Did I know right from wrong?" he asked. "I can say, yes, I did know right from wrong."

Still, his sentence is harsh, Mr. Kane said, spent in the prison print shop making 55 cents an hour and playing sports in the evenings.

"You have no hope of getting out," he said. "You have no family. You have no moral support here. This can be hard."

Mr. Attridge, the prosecutor, who is now in private practice, said he felt sorry for Mr. Kane. "But he had options," Mr. Attridge said. "He had a way out. The other boys decided to leave."

In the end, the prosecutor said, "I do think he was more curious than an evil perpetrator."

"Could Tim Kane be your kid, being in the wrong place at the wrong time?" he asked.

"I think he could. It takes one night of bad judgment and, man, your life can be ruined."

## Different Accounts of a Crime

Visitors to the women's prison here are issued a little transmitter with an alarm button on it when they enter, in case of emergency. But Ms. Falcon is small and slim and not particularly threatening.

She sat and talked, in a flat Midwest tone married to an urban rhythm, on a concrete bench in an outdoor visiting-area. It was pleasant in the shade.

Her mother, Karen Kaneer, said in a telephone interview that her daughter's troubles began in Kansas when she started to hang around with black youths.

"It wasn't the good black boys," Ms. Kaneer said. "It was the ones who get in trouble. She started trying marijuana."

Not pleased with where things were heading, Ms. Kaneer agreed to send Rebecca away, to Panama City, Fla., to Rebecca's grandmother. "It was my husband's idea," Ms. Kaneer said ruefully, referring to Ms. Falcon's stepfather. "Her and my husband didn't have the best of relations."

Ms. Falcon received a piece of unwelcome news about an old boyfriend on the evening of Nov. 18, 1997, and she hit her grandparents' liquor cabinet, hard, drinking a big tumbler of whiskey. Later on, when she joined up with her 18-year-old friend, Mr. Gilchrist, she said, she did not suspect that anything unusual was going to happen. She thought they were taking the cab to a party.

"I didn't know there was going to be a robbery at that time," she said. "I mean, Cliff said things like he was going to try out his gun eventually, but as far as right then that night in that situation I didn't know."

Asked if she played any role in the killing, Ms. Falcon said, "No, sir, I did not."

In a letter from prison, where he is serving a life term, Mr. Gilchrist declined to comment. At his trial, both his lawyer and the prosecutor told the jury that Ms. Falcon was the killer.

The medical evidence suggested that the passenger who sat behind Mr. Phillips killed him. But eyewitnesses differed about whether that was Ms. Falcon or Mr. Gilchrist.

Several witnesses did say that Ms. Falcon had talked about violence before the shooting and bragged about it afterward.

"On numerous occasions she said she wanted to see someone die," Mr. Appleman, the prosecutor, said. Ms. Falcon said the evidence against her was "basically, that I was always talking crazy."

The testimony grew so confused that at one point Mr. Appleman asked for a mistrial, though he later withdrew the request.

Though their verdict form suggested that they concluded that Mr. Gilchrist was the gunman, the jurors remain split about what was proved. "There was no evidence presented to confirm who was the actual shooter," said Mr. Sharp, the jury's foreman.

But Barney Jones, another juror, said he believed Ms. Falcon shot the gun. "She was confused," he said. "She was probably a typical teenager. She was trying to fit in by being a violent person. The people she hung out with listened to gangster rap, and this was a sort of initiation."

Whoever was to blame, Mr. Phillips's death left a terrible void. "Each day we see a cab, the memories of our son and the tragic way he died surfaces," his father and stepmother, Roger and Karen Phillips, wrote at the time of the trial in a letter to Mr. Gilchrist, according to an article in The News-Herald, a newspaper in Panama City.

At the prison here, as Ms. Falcon talked, a photographer started shooting, and she seemed to enjoy the attention, flashing a big smile at odds with the grim surroundings.

It was a break, she explained, from the grinding monotony that is the only life she may ever know. She reads to kill time and to prepare herself in case a Florida governor one day decides to pardon her.

She had just finished a book on parenting.

"If God lets me go and have a kid," she said, "I want to know these things so I can be a good mother."

## Years of Regret Follow a Hasty Guilty Plea Made at 16

By ADAM LIPTAK

WALLA WALLA, Wash. — The prosecutor was in the middle of his opening statement, describing in vivid and disturbing detail the murders of Homer and Vada Smithson, who had just celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary.

The defendant, Donald Lambert, 16, doozed as he listened. Then, court records show, he passed a note to his lawyer. It said he wanted to plead guilty.

Mr. Lambert entered his plea 13 minutes later, after a brief conversation with his lawyer, Guillermo Romero. The plea required Mr. Lambert to spend the rest of his life in prison. Mr. Lambert said Mr. Romero, who has since been disbarred, offered him no guidance.

"He didn't go into, like I know now, that it was my whole life," Mr. Lambert said in an interview at the Washington State Penitentiary here. "None of my family was in the courtroom. I was on my own."

There is little question of Mr. Lambert's guilt. But there are substantial ones about whether he and other juveniles facing life sentences are competent to make decisions with permanent consequences. Had Mr. Lambert rolled the dice and allowed the trial to proceed, he could have done no worse than what he agreed to in his plea.

In Washington as in other states, minors who sign a contract to buy a stereo or a bicycle are allowed to change their minds. They are, in the words of the State Supreme

Court, "incompetent to contract away their rights."

But minors are allowed to enter binding plea agreements that call for life without the possibility of parole.

"He's got a right to plead guilty," said John Knodell, who prosecuted Mr. Lambert. "We trust kids that age to get an abortion."

Mr. Lambert, now 23, is an imposing young man, six feet of blocky muscle under a white T-shirt and blue jeans. He is covered in ugly prison tattoos, created with the motors from cassette decks. The tattoos climb up his neck, onto the back of his big square head and over an eyebrow. They compete for attention with a scar on his forehead. The combined effect is menacing.

At the prison interview here, Mr. Lambert's new lawyers instructed him not to answer questions about the killings.

But according to court records, early in the morning on May 21, 1997, Mr. Lambert, then 15, and Adam Betancourt, 16, burst into the bedroom of Mr. and Mrs. Smithson, both in their late 80's, in Quincy, Wash.

The youths shot Mr. Smithson many times, in the head, chest, legs and abdomen, and then went outside to reload. Mrs. Smithson made a desperate phone call to her son: "They're killing me!"

"The phone was right by a big kitchen window," recalled Al Smithson, the couple's son. The youths then shot her through the window. "They peppered her big time," Mr. Smithson said.

In 2003, a federal judge in Spokane threw out Mr. Lambert's guilty plea, calling his lawyer's conduct "unprofessional," "egregious" and "a dereliction of duty."

"Mr. Lambert had everything to lose by entering the guilty plea," wrote Judge W. Fremming Nielsen, who was appointed by the first President Bush. The decision to plead guilty to aggravated first-degree murder "was the most important decision of his life, and he was forced to make it without essential information."

There was evidence, Judge Nielsen wrote, suggesting that Mr. Lambert incorrectly thought he was facing the death penalty and that the sentence he pleaded to would allow him to be paroled after 20 years.

Mr. Romero, the defense lawyer, was disbarred last year for conduct unrelated to Mr. Lambert's plea. In an interview, Mr. Romero said that his former client pleaded guilty with full knowledge of the consequences. Mr. Romero said he was unsurprised that Mr. Lambert now claims to have been confused.

"I would lie on my mother's grave," Mr. Romero said, "if I thought it would save me from life in prison."

Judge Nielsen, in his 2003 decision, ordered prosecutors to try Mr. Lambert or release him. But the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, in San Francisco, reversed that ruling last year, saying that Mr. Lambert had known what he was doing when he pleaded guilty.

# Incarceration rate for black youth spurs Village Initiative

Sunday, October 2, 2005

BY LIZ COBBS

Ann Arbor News Staff Reporter

## **Q. What is the Village Initiative?**

A. The Village Initiative is an effort to reduce the disproportionate incarceration rate of African-American youth in juvenile detention in Washtenaw County. The Village Initiative plays on the African proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child."

## **Q. Who's involved in the Village Initiative?**

A. Faith-based groups in the community, which includes First United Methodist Church of Ypsilanti, Second Baptist Church in Ypsilanti, Brown Chapel AME Church in Ypsilanti, and the Washtenaw County Juvenile Court. The involvement of the juvenile court system is key because the courts will be referring the kids who will be in the program. Juvenile court is a strategic partner because of its Building Restorative Communities Initiative. The basic concept behind the Village Initiative is a restorative justice philosophy (connecting youth to those they have harmed in the community by having them directly repair the damage they have caused).

## **Q. Where did the idea for the Village Initiative come from?**

A. In January, a friend of mine called me and told me her son had been picked up and placed in the juvenile detention facility. He was kept three weeks and then let go. During that time, I got involved in exploring the juvenile court system because that's something that had always been of interest to me. That's when I found out that about the disproportionate incarceration of African-American youth in the facility. In 2004, the number of (youth) admitted (to the juvenile detention facility) was 474 and 54 percent of the total number of youth were African American (according to juvenile court statistics). That's absolutely way out of balance, given the fact that African Americans only represent 13 percent of the county's general population. That's not even good for the community to have that many kids engaged in the system. I felt like this is a problem the community needs to respond to. That's why my tag line on the logo will be, "It takes a village" - because it will be up to the "village" to decide what the "village" can do.

## **Q. How old are the youth who will participate in the initiative?**

A. From 13 to 17 years old, both male and female.

## **Q. How will the Village Initiative work?**

A. The youth will be paired with adult mentors who will provide them with structure and emotional guidance, engage them in one-on-one discussions and involve them in community service learning. We'll also divide them into groups and they will come together once every three months and plan community service projects to do together as a group.

## **Q. Why is community service learning important?**

A. A lot of kids in situations like this don't see community service as a positive, they see it as a punishment because they have done something to damage the community. They don't have the history of community service like, for example, kids in the honor society. The idea is to create that kind of understanding so they can be involved in building something positive in their community.

They will define the community service projects themselves and carry them out so they will get the idea of giving back to the community or making an investment in the community.

**Q. Where will the mentors come from?**

A. We are going to be recruiting the adults from the general community. There will be an application process and a set of criteria they must meet. There will be a screening process not only to weed out individuals who won't be appropriate for the program but to find the appropriate match between the young person and the adult. We're asking the mentors to make a one-year commitment and meet at least two hours a week with the youths.

**Q. How will you measure the Village Initiative's success?**

A. From the very beginning, we will have an evaluation in place so we can collect baseline information to use to chart the kids' progress in the program, such as whether they've incurred any more offenses while in the program, the reduction (in percentage) of probation violations, whether they are making progress in school and the number of service learning projects they're engaged in.

Out of 269 applications reviewed (by the Corporation for National and Community Service), they only funded six and the Village Initiative was one of them. If our program proves successful, they (the CNCS) will be looking at this as a potential model for other communities struggling with the same issues.

For more information about the Village Initiative, call Lefiest Galimore at (734) 502-5775.

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Sunday, October 2, 2005

## **Health authority short on cash**

### **Wayne County agency charged with helping the uninsured faces a \$500,000 budget shortfall.**

By Sharon Terlep / The Detroit News

Daunting obstacles and a slower-than-expected start are hanging over the fledgling agency launched last year to deliver medical care to thousands of uninsured in Wayne County.

The Detroit Wayne County Health Authority is charged with funneling private money and caregivers into a health system for the county's neediest residents. The goal: Lighten the load for hospitals and businesses carrying much of the burden of 700,000 uninsured and underinsured people in Wayne County.

But 20 months after its creation, the authority has garnered little corporate support. The group laid off its three-member support staff and is \$500,000 short of making its annual budget goal. The Detroit Medical Center -- one of four hospitals to pledge money to the agency annually for three years -- hasn't given any.

"It's taken longer for the pieces to come into place," said Sandy Hudson, the agency's chief operating officer. "We've got to start at the point we're at and, right now, we're at a point of really selling this."

Creating a system to get uninsured residents into first-rate primary care programs will take five years and yet-to-be determined millions of dollars from the community. The authority, run by a three-member staff and a governing board that includes dozens of community leaders, spent its first year creating a plan, called Networks 2010, which details how the authority will operate.

They recently began presenting the concept to community leaders.

Under the plan, county residents with little or no health coverage would call a phone number and get directed to services ranging from primary care to specialty surgeries. Patients would receive a card, similar to an insurance card, allowing them to access services.

A major piece of the program will be an electronic records system that collects medical data on individuals and shares it between health care providers. Millions of dollars are wasted on repetitive tests and diagnosis on people who have no regular health care provider, a problem the system would address.

Other cities, such as Chicago and Los Angeles, have successfully created effective health authorities. Those systems took between five and 10 years to get running, Hudson said. Detroit's job may be tougher.

The city is in the midst of a physician shortage, making it difficult to find doctors willing to provide care at reduced costs. Doctors in the city already face some of the highest malpractice rates in the nation, making money tight. Hudson said hundreds of doctors must participate to make the authority a success.

Tough economic times have business and governmental bodies strapped for cash. At the same time, numerous charitable causes are in need of donations.

"The challenge for the authority is to make the business case that this will have an impact on the bottom line for businesses," said Betty Buss, who sits on the authority's community board and directs policy projects for Detroit Renaissance, a private nonprofit created to help fuel the region's economy. "We have not seen that case made yet."

Spawned in the midst of a financial crisis that threatened to close the Detroit Medical Center, the authority was created as a way to take the load off hospitals. Wayne County's

four health systems spend about \$600 million a year on medical costs that are never reimbursed.

The authority must raise about \$500,000 to reach its 2006 goal of \$2.2 million. About \$500,000 of its 2005 budget came from a federal grant and another \$1 million was donated.

The DMC, Henry Ford Health System, St. John Health and Oakwood Health System pledged \$50,000 a year to the authority.

The DMC, which has yet to make a financial contribution, plans to give staff time and physical space, as well as other in-kind donations, to fulfill its \$50,000 promise, health system spokeswoman Sue Capatina said. The other health systems gave cash.

Hudson said the initial agreement with the DMC was for cash, but the organization has since come under new leadership.

Cash is what the authority needs, Hudson said.

Three assistants were recently laid off, partly to save money and because the authority's needs changed, officials said. Temporary workers are filling the spots.

"We have been moving quite quickly" since Chris Allen was hired as the authority's chief executive officer, Hudson said. "Everyone is starting to focus on a single plan."

Community leaders express a mix of wariness and optimism when assessing the authority's recent progress.

"We've been waiting to hear more about what they're doing," said Alan Mindlin, president of the Michigan State Medical Society. "There's been no meetings to show up at or things to do. I thought there would be more traffic by this point."

Gov. Jennifer Granholm has been watching the situation closely, spokeswoman Heidi Hansen said.

"We're encouraged on the progress they're making," Hansen said. "The work that needs to be done isn't going to happen overnight."

### **Help for uninsured**

The Detroit Wayne County Health Authority's plan to provide health care to the needy involves assigning patients to a case manager who:

- Registers them in an electronic medical record system.
- Qualifies the patient for insurance programs, such as Medicaid.
- Assigns patients a primary care provider.
- Schedules appointments for patients and arranges transportation.

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Sunday, October 2, 2005

## Stricter day care rules sought

Child-care operators in Michigan face limits on TV time, ban on trampolines under state proposals.

By Brad Heath / The Detroit News

Television and trampolines may become less popular at Michigan day care centers.

State day care regulators are considering new rules that would bar most of Michigan's child care centers from planting kids in front of the television for more than two hours a day and would ban trampolines altogether.

The rules would also require extra training for employees, part of a series of steps officials said are needed to improve quality and safety at day care centers.

"Children are our most valuable resource, and the proposed changes to child care regulations help to ensure that children are receiving high-quality care that improves their early development and gives them a great start in life," said Maureen Sorbet, a spokeswoman for the state Department of Human Services, which oversees approximately 20,000 day care centers. Still, not all of them like the idea.

"My TV is on all day," said Mary Garrett, who has run a small day care center for children younger than 5 years old out of her Detroit home for the past 22 years. "I don't think the state limiting that is a good idea. You can monitor what the kids watch and you can still help them learn. They don't watch anything and everything. I try to get them to watch something that's going to help them when they get to school."

She's all for shooing the kids outside to play, she said, "but on a rainy, cold day, you know you're not going to be able to let them out."

The changes are part of two sets of day care rules proposed by state regulators. Neither has been finalized.

One would apply to the state's roughly 15,000 family and group day care centers, which can take no more than 12 children. In addition to barring trampolines and too much TV, the proposed rules would require center owners to get 10 hours of training every year; and would force the facilities to get radon tests and have windows that allow easy escape in an emergency.

The other is aimed at bigger facilities, the day care centers, preschools and Montessori schools that serve more than 250,000 kids. They would require employees to get at least 12 hours of training every year, increase training requirements for people who operate the facilities, force playground equipment to meet higher safety standards and make fire inspections more frequent. Regulators said they don't yet know how many changes the centers will have to make to live up to the new rules if they're approved.

### **Hearing scheduled**

The Department of Human Services will hear comments on the proposed changes for larger day care operators at a hearing from 3-7:30 p.m. Oct. 12 at the Macomb Intermediate School District, 4401 Garfield, Clinton Township. Hearings on changes for smaller facilities have concluded.

Sunday, October 2, 2005

## **Keep day care limits in Troy neighborhoods**

### **Ordinance allows service in homes but only up to a point**

The Detroit News - Editorial

There's no need to convert Troy into a nursery, and a crackdown on family home day care centers is justified.

Ordinances bar or limit commercial operations for a reason -- to help keep down traffic and noise in residential neighborhoods. Call it a quality-of-life issue.

There is, however, a legitimate demand for day care. Of all Troy families with preschool children, about half are families in which both parents work.

More than 17,000 children in the city are under age 15 (21 percent of the total population), according to the Census Bureau.

Troy balances the need for day care with neighborhood livability by limiting the number of children in family home day care. Six children are allowed in each of the estimated 45 family day care centers in Troy.

But some day care operators are cheating. And the stir has made it all the way to city planners.

The matter is on hold pending the fate of state House Bill 4398, which would reorganize three laws governing zoning into a single act. But the measure is not expected to change the substance of the laws, so the matter will likely end up where it belongs, under local control.

The Troy ordinance limiting home day care enrollment is fine the way it stands. It permits and regulates a needed service. But it limits the intrusion of business on neighborhoods.

#### **Young population**

More than 21 percent of Troy residents are under age 15.

- **Under 5 years:**

6.2 percent

- **5 to 9 years old:**

7.3 percent

- **10 to 14 years**

**old:** 7.9 percent

*Source: 2000*

*Census*

**Wayne County**  
***Sunday Briefs***  
***Detroit New***  
**10/3/05**

## **Deadbeat suspects face extradition**

Gov. Jennifer Granholm has started extradition proceedings against two men accused of being deadbeat dads of Wayne County children. Chris Montoya of New Mexico is charged with failing to pay more than \$131,000 in child support. In January 1989, Montoya was ordered to pay \$88 per week for the children but has failed to do so, officials said. John Randall Baker of Arizona is charged with owing more than \$70,000 in child support. In October 1995, Baker was ordered to pay \$190 per week. Both men face up to four years in prison.

# Family won't stop fighting for boy

## Judge reversed herself, gave him to his foster parents

October 3, 2005

BY KIM NORTH SHINE

FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

It's been two months since a Wayne County family judge decided that 6-year-old Devin Alexander should be adopted by his foster family, but his biological family isn't ready to give up the fight for him.

"Here's a relative trying to get a child out of the system and it's been a fight the whole way," said his aunt Lawanda Harrison. "We're trying to do the right thing, and it's a slap in the face."

The long-running adoption dispute encapsulates the hot-button issues of race, the merits of single-parent homes versus two-parent, mother-father households and the importance of keeping children with blood relatives.

Wayne County Family Court Judge Sheila Gibson Manning took those factors and several others into consideration in August in choosing foster parents Rhonda and Scott Porter of Taylor, a white married couple who raised Devin for most of the last four years, over Harrison, a single black Detroit mother who briefly had custody of Devin as an infant.

Manning's latest decision reverses one she made in November when she said Harrison could adopt the child, while complaining that more should have been done to keep Devin with relatives.

Devin remained in the Porters' home while the judge held new hearings.

Harrison had custody of Devin for several weeks after his mother disappeared. But she lost him when the state refused her request that Devin live with his grandmother while Harrison ended a volatile marriage.

After several foster home placements, Devin went to live with the Porters. He was a 22-month-old non-talker with a raging temper.

Since then, he has progressed, and some social workers testified that the Porters helped Devin reach milestones they feared were unattainable.

"Devin is where he belongs," Ron Giles, the Porters' attorney, said Friday. He spoke on behalf of the family; the Porters did not respond to interview requests.

Devin is in kindergarten and still the center of attention at the Porter home, where two older adopted sisters also live.

Yet, difficulties continue to be a part of Devin's day-to-day routine.

Therapists and special education teachers are working to overcome emotional and developmental delays that started at birth.

Devin was born with cocaine in his blood, and his mental and physical state worsened as he moved through several foster homes. He was removed for neglect from one and suffered a serious, unexplained head injury at another.

Devin still sees his biological family at weekly visits. They are no longer court-ordered, but the Porters want to keep them connected with his blood relatives.

Harrison and Devin's grandmother now live in a new, larger house with Devin's half-sister and three cousins.

The women bought the home based on what the state told them they needed to get Devin back.

Harrison said she won't give up her fight appealing the adoption order, even though she fears she's unable to cover the cost. Just the transcript, necessary for the appeal, will cost \$2,000, she said.

"It's all about money, and if you don't have it, this is where it stops," Harrison said. "I just really hope this isn't where it stops."

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# County shares cost for foster care

Sunday, October 02, 2005

The Grand Rapids Press

## County shares cost for foster care

OTTAWA COUNTY -- County commissioners will participate in a cost-sharing arrangement with the Department of Human Services for foster care services. The county will contribute more than \$21,700 to the salary of an additional DHS foster care worker. DHS Director Loren Snippe said it would cost the county more than three times that amount for the agency to contract with outside agencies for similar services. DHS is responsible for supervising children placed in foster care. The move could save the county more than \$45,700, Snippe said.

# Fight homelessness, not the homeless

The Kalamazoo Gazette

Sunday, October 2, 2005

Homeless people are becoming more and more visible by the day.

Sometimes they're asking passers-by for pocket change, or rummaging through the trash in search of deposit bottles. Sometimes they're napping on a park bench, or reading in the public library.

They are a frustration to business owners who worry that panhandlers cause potential customers to shy away.

They are a challenge to property owners, who complain when homeless people camp out on their land, and to police who are charged with keeping them from trespassing and from illegal behavior on public property.

And they are the responsibility of all of us.

The ranks of the homeless are growing.

Because of Michigan's persistently bad economy, shortage of affordable housing and cuts in government services, it is clear that the state's homeless problem is not improving.

The local numbers bear that out: Since 1990, the number of shelter nights used by homeless people in Kalamazoo County has more than doubled -- to 92,904 last year. That doesn't count those who avoid going to a shelter.

Some would solve the problem by keeping homeless people moving -- from park bench to library, from library to fast-food restaurant, from fast-food restaurant back to the park bench.

Others would solve the problem by insisting that they be allowed to collect in one place, and allowing the proliferation to drive others away from that area.

Neither is much of a solution.

Most of these people are temporarily homeless. They're low-income people who lived from paycheck to paycheck until their jobs disappeared, rent payments were missed and eviction notices came. Or they fled abusive relationships in the middle of the night.

The temporarily homeless are perhaps easiest to help. They gladly accept shelter. They can be assisted in finding new employment, a new home. But with a struggling economy that is not creating many high-wage jobs, and with housing devouring an enormous percentage of their low incomes, they'll always live just inches away from homelessness.

For them, economic growth and job creation are crucial, as well as greater commitment at all levels of government to provide long-term, affordable housing.

For the chronically homeless, who more often than not are struggling with mental illnesses or substance abuse, the challenges are different. It is sometimes hard to convince them to accept shelter. They're often unable to hold jobs. Government-sponsored mental health care and substance-abuse programs for them must be aggressive and intensive. And that can be expensive -- some would say too expensive -- for taxpayers to support.

If we really are concerned about homelessness in Kalamazoo, then we must do more than shoo these people from public places and more than insist that their growing numbers be tolerated.

But it will take a concerted effort on the part of government and business officials, along with social services and nonprofit organizations, to make a difference.

Can city, county, state and federal officials make this a priority in their next year's budgets?  
Can the Kalamazoo Regional Chamber of Commerce and Southwest Michigan First make the issue of homelessness part of their economic development plans?

Robert Putnam, a Harvard University public policy professor and best-selling author, told a Kalamazoo audience recently that this community should work to reverse the national trend of more people living in isolation. Find ways to draw people together to work on addressing community problems, he said.

Putnam said we need to do more ``bridging" in our community to bring people who are different together in a united purpose.

It seems like homelessness would be a likely cause.

Jack Hopkins, president and CEO of the Kalamazoo Community Foundation, said the foundation would be eager to support a group of people interested in establishing a national model for building social capital -- essentially neighbors helping neighbors -- for a community.

A group of people in this community aiming to eliminate homelessness should take him up on that offer.

*Detroit Free Press*

*October 3, 2005*

*News In a Minute*

## **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

### **Activists to be recognized at annual awards event**

Wayne County Clerk Cathy M. Garrett will host the third annual Domestic Violence Awareness Month Awards breakfast at 8 a.m. Tuesday at Crystal Gardens, 16703 Fort St., Southgate.

The eight award winners are: Lila Amen of ACCESS Domestic Violence Program, Joseph Cummings of the Salvation Army, Laurie Moore of Looking for My Sister, the Rev. Michael Orr of Dominion Family Services, Dolores Gonzales Ramirez of LaVida, Deacon Lurecie Marie Stokes of Women's Justice Center/My Sister's Place, and Barbara Watry and Amy Youngquist of First Step.

Admission is a donation of an item on the wish list, such as women's clothing, personal items, retail or grocery gift cards, cellular phones for emergency use and more.

To reserve a spot, call 313-967-6538 during business hours.

By Antionette D. Griffith



## CANTON TOWNSHIP

### Principal found innocent in sex case



Sexton

A Wayne Circuit Court jury found a former school principal innocent of three counts of third-degree criminal sexual conduct. Clark N. Sexton, 30, of Westland was cleared of the charges Thursday. He was charged in February with being involved with a student at Agape Christian Academy in Canton Township from 1999 to 2001, police Sgt. Rick Pomorski said. Sexton was principal until May 2004.

D. N

10/2/05

Pg 2D

# State Senate to consider same-sex benefits issue

Resolutions ask  
state's high court  
to halt process

By AMY F. BAILEY

Associated Press

15  
10/3  
The state Senate is expected to take up two measures this week that would ask the Michigan Supreme Court to issue an order preventing state and local governments from providing benefits to same-sex partners of their workers.

The resolutions were introduced after an Ingham County judge ruled that public universities and governments can provide health insurance to the partners of gay employees without violating the Michigan Constitution.

Ingham County Circuit Judge Joyce Draganchuk said the purpose of a 2004 constitutional amendment was to ban gay marriage and civil unions — not to keep public employers from offering benefits to gay employees.

The resolutions, introduced by Republican Sen. Alan Cropsey of DeWitt, would ask the state's high-



Cropsey

est court to issue a temporary restraining order to prevent the use of taxpayer money to fund benefits for homosexual unions until the court has ruled on its constitutionality.

A measure passed by Michigan voters last November made the union between a man and a woman the only agreement recognized as a marriage "or similar union for any purpose." Those six words led to a fight over benefits for gay couples.

Attorney General Mike Cox issued a legal opinion in March saying the measure prohibited the city of Kalamazoo from providing domestic partner benefits in future contracts. But 21 gay couples who work for Kalamazoo, universities and the state filed a lawsuit challenging Cox's interpretation.

Cox, a Republican, said he would appeal the judge's decision because "the people of Michigan spoke very clearly on the amendment," spokeswoman Alison Pierce said.

Also this week, the House Tax Policy Committee will take up a bill that would limit the amount of sales tax the state collects on fuel.

The same-sex benefits resolutions are SCR 33 and SR 68; the bill to cap the sales tax on gas is House Bill 4204.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**September 30, 2005**

## **Governor Calls on Legislature to Pass Her Economic Package**

LANSING – In her weekly radio address, Governor Jennifer M. Granholm today highlighted her comprehensive jobs package to reform Michigan's economy, and urged the Legislature to act quickly in passing the bills.

"Today, it is time to put politics aside and work together to pass an economic recovery plan," Granholm said. "And that means we in state government cannot wait in acting to secure our economic future."

The Governor commended the House of Representatives in taking the first step in passing her proposal to create a \$2 billion fund to diversify Michigan's economy and create thousands of jobs. Granholm presented a comprehensive jobs package to reform Michigan's economy in her State of the State address in February. The economic package included:

- Accelerating public infrastructure projects to create tens of thousands of construction and design and engineering jobs right now;
- establishing a new business tax structure to make Michigan even more competitive in the market place;
- offering a new \$4,000 college scholarship for every child in Michigan; and,
- making an unprecedented \$2 billion investment in Michigan to diversify the state's economy.

Last week Granholm again called on the Legislature to act on these proposals and pass the bills that have been before them since March.

The Governor's weekly radio address is released each Friday at 10:00 a.m. and may be heard on broadcast stations across that state through an affiliation with the Michigan Association of Broadcasters. The address will also be available on the Governor's Website on Mondays as a podcast for general distribution to personal MP3 players and home computers.

**Broadcasters Note:** Governor Granholm's radio address can be accessed through Sunday evening exclusively through the Members Only page of the Michigan Association of Broadcasters website.

*Monday, October 3, 2005*

*Detroit News*

*Letter*

## Charities should aid victims in Metro Detroit

It is estimated that churches and charitable organizations in Metro Detroit have already generated in excess of \$7 million to help those in the South to recover from Hurricane Katrina. This follows record-breaking financial support from our community to the tsunami victims. This is a tremendous compliment to the community, especially when realizing our economy, unemployment and poverty lead the way in American cities.

What troubles me is knowing that we have approximately 800 persons who have been displaced due to the Hurricane Katrina disaster who are now residing in our community. As of this date, Detroit charities do not seem to care about the future welfare of these individuals.

It is without question that we, the urban pastors, will be called on to carry the burden of these moral and spiritual recovery responsibilities. Let it not be a surprise to any of us that unless we work together on a meaningful, humanitarian recovery program, it is inevitable that the future in our community and nation will not be a racial uprising as much as humanitarian chaos.

I plead for the churches, government, Red Cross and Salvation Army to work with us in a humanitarian plan to first care for our needs related to the victims living in our community. It does not make sense to send all donated funds to those in our Southern states affected by the hurricane and ignore assisting the needs of the displaced victims in our community.

We of Little Rock Baptist Church have offered homes for 340 hurricane victims. How disappointing it is for me to experience our communities' apparent unwillingness to join with us.

*Rev. Jim Holley*

*Little Rock Baptist Church*

*Detroit*

## Help locals first

When did Michigan residents decide to help the homeless victims of Hurricane Katrina before helping their own homeless? It makes me sick that my own mother, father and eight siblings have been homeless for over a year and cannot get any help, as we keep cutting away.



Granholm

Thank you, Gov. Jennifer Granholm.

But we have the means to help the people from miles away move into our state, get our aid and jobs. This has to stop! I know they are in need of help, but how can we help others if we are failing as a state ourselves?

I hope the people of Michigan will see my point and put a stop to this nonsense. I know they need help, but our own residents were here first and should be the ones to be helped first.

**Deana R. Moon Thompson**  
Lansing

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RENEE GILBERT, *Sterling Heights*

# Social worker took job to a new level

*The Detroit News*

Renee Gilbert took her profession as a social worker to heart.

She learned Russian to bridge the communication gap with a Russian family she was helping to settle in Metro Detroit. And she studied sign language to help a family whose members were deaf.



Mrs. Gilbert

Her clients "considered her a guardian angel," said her husband, Larry Gilbert.

Mrs. Gilbert of Sterling Heights died from ovarian cancer Monday, Sept. 26, 2005, at Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak. She was 50.

A Detroit native, Mrs. Gilbert attended Michigan State University, where she studied economics

from 1973-77. It was at MSU that she met Larry. The couple were married in 1978.

Mrs. Gilbert worked for the Michigan Department of Human Services for more than 26 years as a social worker and a manager for the Family Independence Agency. She worked for the agency's offices in Warren, Pontiac, Mount Clemens and Madison Heights.

A longtime ballroom dancer, Mrs. Gilbert started taking lessons in the 1980s. In the past few years, she began teaching ballroom dancing.

"She knew how to make anyone look good out on the dance floor," her husband said.

Other survivors include her mother, Leontine Hoffman; and a sister, Helga Chapp.

A funeral Mass was celebrated Friday at St. Jane DeChantal Catholic Church in Sterling Heights.

Burial was in Resurrection Cemetery in Clinton Township.